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In Cleveland County's Early Days

BY MAMIE JONES

Something About The Pioneers Of Number Three Township

"Sketches of Col. Wm. Graham, Sheriff Charles Blanton, Drury Burchett, Minor Smith, The Doggetts, and Rev. Drury Dobbins."

The above lines are the heading of an article sent me by Mrs. J. R. Oates, of Asheville; which article, she says, was published "in a Shelby paper" in April, 1912. She says further: "the Burwell Blanton who died in 1908, is my father."

We quote the article herewith: "Our ancestors and pioneers in No. 3 Township, Cleveland County, were not learned in books or skilled in oratory, but they laid deep and broad the foundations of civilization.

"They subdued the forests, fought nobly life's battles and we, the heirs of all the ages, enjoy the fruits of their toil.

"Among the first settlers in No. 3 township was Col. Wm. Graham, a Revolutionary hero, who sleeps on a hill on Broad River, near Lily Power dam. Graham's Fort in which a 17-year-old madien, Susan Twitty, acted so bravely in the Tory attack on the Fort, and Graham — Grame-Grime's field still lingers in the memories of our aged men. Scott's "Lady of the Lake" tells us about Graham of Grimes in one of his cantos.

Sheriff Charles Blanton

"Charles Blanton, Cleveland County's sheriff for ten years, was a stalwart character, so popular among the voters. Cleveland County was organized in 1841. Then Sheriff Blanton, son of Burwell Blanton, collected taxes which never amounted to near \$5,000 total for one year. In his old age he told Rev. L. L. Smith 'We will never have good times and economy in taxes until we quit sending lawyers and doctors to the Legislature.' Was his prophecy right or wrong?

"His children were: James Blanton, who died in early manhood; Albert Blanton, who died in Shelby six years ago (1906); George Blanton, who died in Texas; Burwell Blanton, a banker, who died in Shelby four years ago (1908); Pink and Guilford Blanton, who died during the war; William Blanton, a prominent citizen of Marion, N. C.;

John Blanton, who was Sheriff of Rutherford County and now lives at Forest City; Mrs. Elivra Suttle, widow of Rev. Joseph Suttle; Mrs. Jane Suttle, widow of ex-sheriff D. D. Suttle; and Mrs. Mag. Doggett, widow of Minor Doggett.

"A host of Blantons in Cleveland County trace their descent from Burwell Blanton, father of Sheriff Charles Blanton, dead; the latter died on Brushy Creek, five miles from Shelby.

Drury Burchett

"Theodonie Burchett was a courtly gentleman with slaves and lands, which he bequeathed to his son, Drury Burchett; and to Mrs. Maria Champion, who lived and died in the old Champion house where Paul Webb's drug store now stands; and to Mrs. Dr. Jennings of Shelby. Drury Burchett was eccentric; never married; owned slaves; and died on the Jackson Blanton farm, now owned by M. M. Moore.

Minor Smith

"Minor Smith dispensed genial hospitality in a nice and large house on a hill commanding Broad River near the old Durham Mill and Bridge. He was an uncle of Rev. L. L. Smith of the Sharon section.

"I remember when a small lad about a huge wedding in that home; when they cooked — my mother assisting — pound cakes for several days prior to the nuptials, and had a huge 'infair.'

"Among the children of this Minor Smith, who was considered then a rich man, were Richard and Robert Smith, who married and moved to Cleveland, Miss.; Mrs. Wilbur Cabaniss, Mrs. Coleman Doggett, who died of apoplexy in 1861, at the W. A. Lattimore and Mrs. Packard farm; Mrs. Thomas Elliott; Mrs. Phillip Hoyle, a teacher and preacher who taught at Sharon and afterward died in Mississippi.

"Rev. Joseph Suttle bought the Minor Smith home and part of his land — 560 acres for \$1500 — in 1885, and died there.

The Doggetts

"About a mile South of Minor Smith's lived the Doggetts: Coleman, James and Dickey Doggett. The latter was killed by his slave with a blow from the rear.

"Space and time forbid my

telling about Lee's old Camp Ground, where the seeds of the Methodist Church were first sown. Nor can I place a laurel over the grave of Rev. Drury Dobbins, a diamond in the rough, who laid the foundation of the Baptist church in Cleveland county. Elihu Burrett was the learned blacksmith of New England, and Drury Dobbins was the eloquent shoe maker who pegged shoes with a book at his side. He labored faithfully at a \$100 a year salary; and to his labors are due the numerical strength of the Baptist churches in this section. A handsome centograph at Sandy Run church commemorates his virtue and self sacrifice."

"The Blantons are of English descent. George Blanton was the first Blanton to cross the ocean. He came with the Hamricks and others into what is now Cleveland County about 1765. (It was Mecklenburg County then). He entered land on the west side of Sandy Run Creek, about two and one half miles southeast of Boiling Springs church. He married Elvira Lee and was buried at his old place. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Tryon County by King George of England, on November 10, 1769, the year after the county was formed." (Quoted from the "History of the Hamrick Generations").

The above mentioned George Blanton was the great grandfather of Burwell Blanton who, as a banker, was a prominent figure in the civic life of Shelby and Cleveland County for many years.

B. Blanton & Co.

In the early eighties Burwell Blanton and S. J. Green became members of the banking firm of H. D. Lee and Jesse Jenkins, (organized 1879); the new firm being H. D. Lee & Co. This organization continued in business until 1895. That year Burwell Blanton and his two sons, George and Charles C., formed the private banking firm of B. Blanton & Co., Bankers.

In 1903, this bank was nationalized and became the First National Bank with Charles C. Blanton, president. During these

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 7)